

Weekly Focus:
Settlers attack Palestinian religious sites
5 September – 12 September

15/09/2011
Ref. No. 288/2011

Background

This week, Al-Haq recorded 17 cases of settler violence, including two attacks against Palestinian civilians in the Jerusalem area. Palestinian religious sites, and other property, were also once again the target of attacks. This week alone, two mosques were burnt and vandalised.

Al-Nourein Mosque

On the morning of 5 September, Muhammad Taysir Farah, a resident of Qusra village (Nablus governorate) was informed by his son that there had been an arson attack on al-Nourein mosque located in the centre of the village.

Muhammad quickly went to the site of the attack where he noticed that the upper storey of the mosque was scorched and blackened as if it had been on fire. He also reported that some of the windows had been broken and that there were burned tires on the floor of the mosque. Slogans in Hebrew were spray painted on the outside walls; one slogan was disrespecting of the Prophet Muhammad, another read: "We will be back".

Muhammad also saw a group of Israeli soldiers standing outside the mosque. When he inquired as to what had happened, one of the soldiers told Muhammad that, "It is your fear that gives the settlers the courage to burn the mosque in the middle of your village" (see Al-Haq Affidavit No. 6605).

Muhammad Ahmad al-Wadi, another village resident, reported rushing to the mosque as soon as he heard the announcement from the muezzin that the mosque had been burned. In addition to the burned tires, broken windows and slogans on the walls, Muhammad Ahmad also saw the remains of a Molotov cocktail inside the mosque.

Muhammad Ahmad also reported seeing around ten Israeli soldiers, one of whom was preparing to paint over the slogans on the walls of the mosque (see Al-Haq Affidavit No. 6604/2011).

Yatma Mosque

An investigation by an Al-Haq field researcher found that Yatma mosque (Nablus governorate) was also sprayed with slogans during the early hours of 8 September. The slogans read: "Migran price tag". Migran is an illegal outpost in the northern West Bank, which was partially dismantled by Israeli authorities earlier this month. 'Price tag' attacks have been a feature of the increase in settler violence.



'Migron Price Tag' spray painted on the mosque in Yatma village – 2011, Al-Haq©